



Parkgate House  
Victoria Road  
Castletown  
Isle of Man  
14<sup>th</sup> May 2014

### Fozzy's Return..... ARA Championship – Round 4

Last weekend saw us compete at the fourth round of the ARA Championship here on the Isle of Man. With Fozzy coming back from injury we would be fielding two bikes, our I2V Darvill-Suzuki in the 650 class and our Darvill-Kawasaki in the Open Classic class.



Keef qualified 2<sup>nd</sup> on the mighty Kawasaki but unfortunately we encountered a warped disc and this meant that we couldn't compete. That's racing....! We still lead the Championship and will be back after the Pre-TT Classic.

Rather than try and put into words the racing I will leave it to Fozzy to give you his perspective:

*I need to race, it's just one of those things I need to do. It breaks me; Both financially and physically but mentally it re-charges me like nothing else can. Of late I've needed that kind of re-charging, I wouldn't say I've been feeling low exactly, I don't do low, never have. I've been told I've been through a lot over the years, but it's never felt that way. Through everything I've been assured I should have felt low but never have, don't know why...don't want to, just lucky I guess, always lucky...I blame everyone ;)*

*I'm not going to lie, getting to the Isle of Man is a pain in the arse, the two available options, boat and plane, seem to conspire to make life difficult, one may get you there in time, but may not be available to get you home in time and all ways of vice versa. it's closer than more than half of the circuits in the UK but costs considerably more and takes far longer to get there... But it's blummin worth it I tell ya! :) And you know that the moment you walk into Keefs house greeted with a welcoming roar and a cold beer. On this occasion we were convening at the Trafalgar Hotel...the Traff...'The Office'. This is where the dreams are made and the banks balances raided...we've had so many, 'why don't we?' moments in the Traff ...*



*Since my little tumble the Darvill team have been keeping me lifted and included with all the goings on and now I'd decided I'd had more than long*



enough off the bike and felt (mostly) recovered. I was weak and sore but fixed to a fashion. So here I was, entered in the 4th round of the Andreas 650 Championship...The plan was to take it really easy; Go out on the I2V Darvill SV, pick up a signature, see how the injuries felt, not hurt myself, and not fall off the bike. Alex (the Boss!) has put a conservative million hours into polishing and putting everything 'just right'..He'd also treated me to some of the best riding gear I have ever dragged onto my wonky old frame...a shiny new set of Held leathers and gloves, TCX Iron-clad carpet slippers (boots!), Force field armour and a Shark Pro racing lid..Proper factory! Thank you so much to Nevis for supporting us so generously!



It felt horrible, the bike didn't fit. I felt stiff and nervous and that really threw me I can't remember the last time I didn't feel completely at home on a motorbike, even after the three months I had off the bike for the transplant it felt like I'd pulled on a pair of old slippers the first time I got back on a strange bike. Last time out on the SV was in October last year at the endurance and it felt great, and we did rather well...and this just didn't feel right...I wasn't moving around on the bike like I know I should and I wasn't able to put those big inputs you need on the bars when you need to brake really deep and still get round the corner I felt weak as a kitten.... So I just gritted my teeth and got on with it, 'just here to get round'. On the final lap the pain from my pelvis and shoulders was close to unbearable and when greeted by Keef in the pits I couldn't get off the bike, I was shaking and I needed to sit down..

I was surprised to see that my times were similar to the Endurance before the accident and even more surprised to see that that was only good enough to qualify 13th in class..(Those times netted us a P2 podium in October!) So mixed feelings; Happy surprise that I wasn't as slow as I thought followed by trepidation that I needed to be much faster, but hang on, no I didn't, I just needed to bring it home..

Unfortunately my mate (and team-mate) Keef had some problems with the Classic and he didn't get out to race he's still leading the Championship it but it's always very disappointing when you don't get to race.

The first race was the first time I'd done a mass start in nearly a year so I was very circumspect and tried to cause as little trouble and get in the way of as few people as I could..after a few corners it all settled down and I tried to get comfy and failed..Ali Foster (no relation) came past me and I knew she goes well around Jurby as she was kind enough to post some on-board footage earlier in the year..so I tried to stay in touch. ..The SV we use is a 'MiniTwin' spec bike so needs to stay limited to around 72



bhp. The 650 class in the Isle of Man runs Supertwin rules so most of the bikes out are running significantly more power than we are. I understand the front running bikes could be as much as 20bhp more...this makes it quite tricky staying in contact with some of the other 650s, the long straight at Jurby means I had to try and make up the deficit in the twisty bits which was proving a little more difficult than usual with not being able to get comfortable. As the 6 lap race wore on I was starting to loosen up, the pain was worse but I felt looser and more relaxed and as I relaxed I started to gain ground on Ali...On the last lap I summoned the confidence to duck underneath and just about managed to hold her behind me until the chequered flag. I hadn't set the world alight but there's nothing like a place gained on the last lap to build the confidence.. :) I still felt a bit sick and shaky when I got off the bike but that quickly dissipated when I found out I'd knocked 4 seconds off my lap-time and finished 9th in class... :)



By the time the second race came around I was getting pretty stiff and sore but was really keen to get back out on that lovely SV...I felt much more with it on the grid and resolved to 'have a go' at the start. I got a pretty good start shooting through at least two rows getting mixed up with the 400s and 125s while the faster 650's shot off the front...I lost a couple of places whilst I got into a rhythm and fixed my gaze on the back of the leading group of the two bikes that passed me one was a 125 (Dan Sayle I think) so not a concern for me but the next was a 650 piloted by James Smith and a credible target so I had to at least try and get that place back...it took me the rest of the race to do it and I had to knock a further second from my best time so far, which was on the last lap when James over-shot the bus-stop chicane and allowed me to close up the gap giving me a sniff of the place...It took a concerted slipstream and late braking move to get it but I got under him at Castle Corner and held it to the flag..just..for a 6th in class... :)

I was totally exhausted! Really REALLY pleased and with the pain subdued under a fog of adrenaline I knew I'd not caused any further damage! Once again an early return vindicated by improving the injuries. (But let's just keep how second hand I felt on the Monday morning on the down-low for now shall we?)



Thanks again to Alex, Keef, Rebecca, Shaun Bostrom, Lizzie, Phil and Champ at Darvill racing for all the help, to Sharon and Phil Hagen at I2V and to our numerous sponsors that keep us going.

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Next up we have a rather special event, I can't say more at the moment but I will be able to spill the beans after the weekend (17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> May), this is followed by the start of our Road Racing season with the Pre-TT Classic on the Bilown (Southern 100) Circuit.



Thanks to all our sponsors without whom this wouldn't be possible

Thanks also go to PistonLife for the images.

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Best Regards,

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